

Message Text

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17

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 IO-11 OMB-01 SAM-01 AID-05 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SCCT-01

CU-02 SY-05 /079 W

----- 123539

O R 151836Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4246

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BERN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY BIENNA

USMISSION USNATO

USMISSION USEC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 0284

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, SP

SUBJ: DEMONSTRATIONS AND THE GOS RESPONSE

REF: MADRID 0197

1. THE ACTIONS OF THE POLICE, SINCE FRAGA HAS ASSUMED CONTROL

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OF THE INTERIOR MINISTRY, HAVE BEEN IN MARKED CONTRAST TO

PROVIOUS PRACTICE. THIS HAS BEEN MOST NOTICEABLE IN THREE AREAS: (A) THE ARRESTS OF RIGHTISTS FOR TERRORIST ACTS, (B) THE RELATIVE RESTRAINT WITH WHICH THEY HAVE HANDLED DEMONSTRATIONS, AND (C) THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE POLICE FROM THE UNIVERSITIES.

2. FOR THE FIRST TIME THE POLICE HAVE ACTED TO DETAIN RIGHT WING PERPETRATORS OF VIOLENCE. BESIDES THE ARREST JAN 8 OF 14 ALLEGED MEMBERS OF THE "GRUPO DE ACCION SINDICALISTA (GAS)" - ALL BUT THREE HAVE BEEN SUBSEQUENTLY RELEASED ON "PROVISIONAL LIBERTY" - THE POLICE ALSO HAD ARRESTED EARLIER TWO OTHER GAS BULLY-BOYS IN BARCELONA. (REFTEL)

3. THE RESTRAINT OF THE POLICE IN DEALING WITH DEMONSTRATIONS HAS COMPLEMENTED THAT OF THE GOVT IN DEALING WITH THE METRO STRIKE. IN MOST CASES, RATHER THAN ARRESTING FOR ILLEGAL ASSEMBLY, THE POLICE HAVE DISPERSED DEMONSTRATIONS AND LIFTED THE ID CARDS OF SOME INDIVIDUALS. THEY HAVE USED TEAR GAS AND OTHER MORE SOPHISTICATED MOB CONTROL METHODS TO AVOID DESPERATE ACTIONS BY EITHER DEMONSTRATORS OR THE POLICE THEMSELVES, E.G., GUIDING DEMONSTRATIONS INTO OPEN STREETS RATHER THAN INTO DEAD END STREETS. STRIKERS AND DEMONSTRATORS FOR A GENERAL AMNESTY HAVE MADE FREQUENT USE OF PARISH CHURCHES AS PLACES OF REFUGE OR FOR SIT-INS; ONLY ON A FEW OCCASIONS HAVE THE POLICE FORCIBLY DISLODGED WORKERS. SOME INJURIES HAVE OCCURRED BUT MOST AS A RESULT OF CONFUSION AND PANIC ON THE PART OF DEMONSTRATORS OR BY-STANDERS. THE CHANGE IN POLICE METHODS IS ALREADY QUITE EVIDENT AND REFLECTS THE CHANGE OF POLICY DEFINED BY THE NEW MINISTER OF INTERIOR AS DESCRIBED BY THE NEW DIRECTOR OF SECURITY, GENERAL CASTRO SAN MARTIN, TO AN EFFECT JAN 15, THE POLICE WANT TO IMPROVE THEIR IMAGE AND AVOID ACTIONS WHICH SMACK OF REPRESSION AND BRUTALITY.

4. JUDGING FROM GOVT STATEMENTS AND ITS ACTIONS THE GOVT DOES NOT INTEND TO "TOLERATE POLITICAL STRIKES" OR STRIKES WHICH DISRUPT ESSENTIAL PUBLIC SERVICES. RATHER THAN USING FORCE TO END STRIKES OR DEMONSTRATIONS, HOWEVER, THE GOVT HAS SOUGHT TO LINE UP PUBLIC OPINION ON ITS SIDE FOR THE CONTINUITY OF ESSENTIAL PUBLIC SERVICES AND USE IT AS A MEANS OF INDUCING STRIKING WORKERS TO RETURN TO THE BARGAINING TABLE. THE CONTINUATION OF A SERIES OF STRIKES IN PUBLIC SERVICES, CONFIDENTIAL

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ACCOMPANIED BY SPORADIC DEMONSTRATIONS, COULD WEAR DOWN THE PLATEAU OF RESTRAINT BEING OBSERVED BY THE POLICE. AND THERE IS CONSERVATIVE AND, WE BELIEVE, MILITARY CRITICISM OF THE NEW GOVT FOR NOT CRACKING DOWN HARDER.

5. THE NEW MINISTER OF EDUCATION, ROBLES PIQUER, ANNOUNCED JAN 9 THAT CONTROL OF THE UNIVERSITIES WOULD BE RETURNED TO UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES, THAT POLICE WOULD BE WITHDRAWN AND

THAT THE RECTORS AND DEANS WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC ORDER ON THE CAMPUSES. ON JAN 12 POLICE MOVED ONTO THE CAMPUS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MADRID (COMPLUTENSE), HOWEVER, TO DISPERSE A LARGE DEMONSTRATION OF STUDENTS. IN THE ABSENCE OF A REPRESENTATIVE STRUCTURE IN THE UNIVERSITIES STUDENTS CAN BE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE DEMONSTRATING FOR THE REFORMS WHICH THE NEW MINISTER HAS PROMISED. UNFORTUNATELY, THE PCE AND THE VARIOUS EXTREMIST STUDENTS WANT THE POLICE TO COME BACK IN ORDER TO QTE DEMONSTRATE UNQTE THE REPRESSIVE CHARACTER OF THE GOS.

6. THE CABINET MEETS THIS EVENING TO DISCUSS THE STRIKE PUBLIC ORDER SITUATION. WE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED TO SEE AN ANNOUNCEMENT, DESIGNED TO QUELL CONSERVATIVE CRITICISM, OF SOME KIND OF GRADUATED RESPONSE TO THESE CHALLENGES, BUT WE DO NOT EXPECT A REAL REVERSAL OF THE NEW, MORE SOPHISTICATED WAY OF DEALING WITH THESE MATTERS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, TERRORISTS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION, POLICE FORCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976MADRID00284
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760016-0684
From: MADRID
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760154/aaaabwcs.tel
Line Count: 133
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 MADRID 197
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <25 MAR 2004 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <03 AUG 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DEMONSTRATIONS AND THE GOS RESPONSE
TAGS: PINT, SP, (FRAGA IRIBARNE, MANUEL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006